

In Others' Words

Editor's Note: In this department, we highlight resources outside of the IJFM: other journals, print resources, DVDs, websites, blogs, videos, etc. Standard disclaimers on content apply. Due to the length of many web addresses, we sometimes give just the title of the resource, the main web address, or a suggested search phrase.

"When War is Waged, People Go Hungry"

The Breadbasket of the World?

One of the global results of Russia's war in Ukraine has been the destruction of global food security.

Russia and Ukraine supply 28% of globally traded wheat, 29% of the barley, 15% of the maize and 75% of the sunflower oil. Russia and Ukraine contribute about half the cereals imported by Lebanon and Tunisia; for Libya and Egypt the figure is two-thirds. Ukraine's food exports provide the calories to feed 400m people. The war is disrupting these supplies because Ukraine has mined its waters to deter an assault, and Russia is blockading the port of Odessa. ("The Coming Food Catastrophe," *The Economist*, May 19, 2022)

The confluence of war and severe drought in multiple places has hundreds of millions on the brink of starvation. "The WFP [World Food Programme] chief said 276 million people are struggling to find food, and 49 million in 43 countries are 'knocking on famine's door,' which results not only in death but 'unmatched migration,' which destabilizes societies." The UN Secretary General put it even more bluntly,

"When war is waged, people go hungry. Some 60 per cent of the world's undernourished people live in areas affected by conflict, . . . no country is immune." Last year, most of the 140 million people suffering acute hunger around the world lived in just ten countries: Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Haiti, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. ("Food Insecurity Threaten Societies: No Country is Immune," *Modern Diplomacy*, May 21, 2022).

The Selling of Children to Avoid Starvation

In Afghanistan, as many as 95% of the population is facing extreme food shortages. World Vision, a major global humanitarian agency, has announced a [Global Hunger Response](#), one of only two such global efforts of this magnitude in its history, the first being a response to the COVID pandemic. Asuntha Charles, World Vision's National Director in Afghanistan, commented that:

I have been heartbroken to see that families are willing to sell their children to feed other family members. Day by day, the situation is deteriorating in this country, and it is especially children who are suffering.

Betrayed by Brothers

For some background on what may have triggered the Ukraine war, check out a blog by Don Fairbairn, a professor of Early Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary about the religious traditions and heritage of the Russian Orthodox Church, which is linked to Kiev: <https://www.gordonconwell.edu/blog/attentiveness-ukraine/>. Despite this strong historic bond between the Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox churches, a great deal of tension has emerged over the Russian Orthodox Church's strong commitment to Putin. Read the article in *Christianity Today* that looks at another group of believers, the Protestant evangelicals in both Russia and the Ukraine, and the differences of opinion expressed by them. Some Ukrainian evangelicals, like some Ukrainian Orthodox priests, are feeling betrayed by their brothers in Russia. ("How Russian Christians View the 'Special Military Operation' in Ukraine," *Christianity Today*, April 22, 2022).

"Nobody is Safe in a System of Lies"

It's a long read, but well worth it. In a striking interview published online, Archbishop-Metropolitan Borys Gudziak remarked that:

. . . There is a lot of disinformation. There are a lot of lies out there. The lies are specific lies like the [Russian] minister of foreign affairs, Sergey Lavrov, a few days ago in Istanbul saying, "We didn't invade Ukraine. We're not invading." Or the general lie, which is becoming law in Russia, "It's not a war, it's a special operation." Or, "We're working against the Nazis led by a Jewish president." They're very specific lies, but there's the deep lie of the system, the corruption, the oligarchic kleptocracy that is led by an authoritarian ruler who has nostalgia for empire and wants to recolonize. That's a lie because it very explicitly negates the value, the dignity of other persons, other cultures, other histories. . . . Nobody is safe in autocracy. Nobody is safe in a system of lies. ("The Spiritual Dimension of the War in Ukraine," *Comment*, March 24, 2022)

A New Promise of Growth in India

For an analysis of changing economic growth in India, don't miss the entire May 13, 2022 issue of *The Economist*:

. . . a new pattern of growth is visible, unlike anything you have seen before. An indigenous tech effort is key. . . . Alongside that, global trends are creating bigger business clusters. The IT-services industry has doubled in size in a decade, helped by the cloud and a worldwide shortage of software workers. Where else can Western firms find half a million new engineers a year? . . . These changes will not lead to a manufacturing boom as big as those in South Korea or China, which created enough jobs to empty the fields of farmers. They do not solve deep problems such as extreme weather or clogged courts. But they do help explain why India is forecast to be the world's fastest-growing big economy in 2022 and why it has a chance of holding on to that title for years. ("The Indian Economy is Being Rewired. The Opportunity is Immense," *The Economist*, May 13, 2022)

And this is all taking place despite the devastating toll taken on India by the pandemic:

[it] killed between 2.2m and 9.7m people. Lockdowns caused the economy to shrink temporarily by a quarter and triggered the largest internal migrations since partition in 1947 as city workers fled to their villages. ("[The Indian Economy is Being Rewired. The Opportunity is Immense](#)," *The Economist*, May 13, 2022)

When Religion Becomes Politicized and Ideological

Simultaneously with this rosy forecast for economic growth in India comes the threat of increasingly violent religious riots. The article entitled, "[How Narendra Modi Is Remaking India into a Hindu State](#)" (Saffron Nation) gives not only an account of religious confrontations but also a history of how this animosity developed (*The Economist*, May 14, 2022). Unfortunately, most of the victims of these large-scale Hindu-Muslim riots have been Muslims (the largest minority in India, making up [about 15% of the population](#), close to 200 million people) or Christians (who make up 2% of the population.)

An Amnesty International report found that after months of peaceful protests against a citizenship law seen as discriminatory toward Muslims turned violent in 2020, the police in New Delhi arrested "Muslims on a mass scale immediately after the riots even though the minority community bore the brunt of the violence" and the report had accused officers of "torturing people." ("[Perpetual Violence: India's Dangerous New Patterns of Communal Tensions](#)," in the *New York Times*, May 11, 2022)

Hindutva Watch, a newsletter and website that tracks religious violence in India against minority and marginalized communities, has some links to very informative articles. For an example of violence against Christians, see "[I'll Keep Serving God Till My Last Breath](#)." Also, don't miss the eloquent opinion in the *LA Times* on August 15th, the 75th anniversary of India's independence, "[As a Hindu, I Can't Stay Silent about Injustices in India—Committed in the Name of our Faith](#)." (*Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 2022)

The Russian Orthodox Church: Entwined with Nationalism?

The Catholic journal *First Things* looked at this religious tension from a broader angle in "[The Russian Path Not Taken](#)" (*First Things*, May 4, 2022). It brings up the topic of how a church becomes entwined with ugly nationalism and how that entanglement silences any prophetic voice it might have had. Examples are drawn from Russian Orthodoxy, but many of the principles and conclusions could apply to other Western countries where religious denominations have almost become voting blocs.

Philip Jenkins takes on the issue of Ukraine's history and looks at past and present Russian empire-building. He also throws some light on the validity of Putin's claim that Ukraine—and

Kyiv in particular—are essential to Russian Orthodoxy and Russian nationalism. See: <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/anxiousbench/2022/05/making-ukraine-and-how-empires-invent-geography/>.

Recent Missiological Publications of Interest

Ever since the first publication by Ralph D. Winter of his historical framework for the study of missions called *The Three Eras*, people have been suggesting a fourth era. Warrick Farah's post on his missiology blog *Circumpolar* commends four aspects that characterize what might be called a Fourth Era, one of which is the burgeoning movements happening across the globe. Don't miss "[A Movemental Turn in Missions: Thoughts on New Eras and New Wineskins](#)" (April 27, 2022). In this blog, he also links to [an article where Bob Priest regrets](#) that in 2006, Winter was persuaded away from revising his *Three Eras* to include a Fourth Era that was more holistic (once in the document, go to page 294). In a July 2022 blog post, Farah very helpfully gives us a link to an article he wrote on the history of Church Planting Movements published in *Missiology* but available for free here: https://www.academia.edu/80063140/The_Genesis_and_Evolution_of_Church_Planting_Movements_Missiology.

The *International Bulletin of Mission Research*, Vol. 46, no. 2 (April 2022), includes two excellent review articles: Joel Carpenter's treatment of Kwame Bediako's major theological themes ("Kwame Bediako Makes an Offer") as recounted in a new book by Tim Hartman entitled: *Kwame Bediako: African Theology for a World Christianity*; and Terry Muck's review article ("Questions of Context: Reading a Century of German Mission Theology") of John Flett and Henning Wrogemann's book by the same name. (See also Brad Gill's review of the same book in *IJFM* 37:3–4, 3rd book review) Both of these *IBMR* articles bring up major missiological themes of great importance to frontier missiologists.

Amid the swirl of hybridity studies in missiology today comes David Earl Datema's article in *Missiology* Vol. 50, No. 2, entitled: "[The Universal Particularism of Panta Ta Ethne: A Biblical Case for the Continued Viability of the People Group Concept in Mission](#)." Its cogent advance of the people group concept is remarkable and compliments—not necessarily contradicts—the insights that emerged on hybridity and culture at the 2021 conference of the American Society of Missiology (<https://www.asmweb.org/annual-meeting-videos>). The Winter Lectureship in Pasadena, CA, also focused this year's theme on "Homogeneity and Hybridity: Revisiting the HUP" (Homogenous Unit Principle), and we look forward to their future publication of those presentations in this journal. **IJFM**